

STATE LIBRARY OF PENNSYLVANIA



3 0144 00080040 9

PE 1.3

Em. S. D

nos. 420-421

~~CLASS P38.19~~ BOOK 13.1

VOLUME No. 420-422



PENNSYLVANIA
STATE LIBRARY



PENNSYLVANIA STATE LIBRARY
General Library Bureau
Government Publications



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/placeofspecialed00penn>

THE PLACE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN OUR MODERN PROGRAM

by
LESTER K. ADE
Superintendent of Public Instruction

[Bulletin 420
Prelim. ed.]

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Harrisburg
1938

Page

I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	A PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.	2
	1. Democracy in Education	2
	2. Individual Differences	4
	3. Content and Method	6
	4. Personality Adjustment	11
III	THE PRACTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.	14
	1. The Development and Scope of Special Education	14
	2. The Identification of Exceptional Children	18
	3. Variation in Needs for Special Education	21
	4. The Cost of Special Education	25
	5. Lower Limits of Mental Exceptionality	27
	6. Outcomes of Special Class Work	29
	SOME POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	32
	1. Influence and General Method	32
	2. Teacher Preparation	33
	3. The Intellectually Superior Child	34
	4. Adjusting to Sparsely Settled Areas	36
	5. The Responsibility of the Administration	38
	CONCLUSION	39
	1. A Permanent Program	39
	2. An Integral Part of Public Education	40
	3. Challenging Problems	40
	4. Vast Possibilities	41

L322029

1. 1

2. 2

3. 3

4. 4

5. 5

6. 6

7. 7

8. 8

9. 9

10. 10

11. 11

12. 12

13. 13

14. 14

15. 15

16. 16

17. 17

18. 18

19. 19

20. 20

21. 21

22. 22

23. 23

THE PLACE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN OUR HUMAN PROGRAM

I INTRODUCTION

Ever since the direct methods of learning practiced by our primitive ancestors, our educational processes have become increasingly involved. With greater numbers of children to be educated, came a wider range of capacities, interests and needs. The teacher-pupil ratio progressed from that of one pupil per teacher to conditions ranging from twenty-five to one hundred children per teacher. While teachers were somewhat more able to deal with the large numbers who were more or less like the average of the group, their problems with those children who were markedly above average or below average reached a state where they had either to be ignored or to take most of their time. It is in connection with society's efforts in meeting the needs of these exceptional children that we are here concerned. We shall consider (1) the basic attitudes under which this work goes forward; (2) the outstanding activities in this field; and, (3) the trends along which we might well move in adjusting education to the needs of those who are markedly handicapped or superior.

II A PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Democracy in Education

There has been considerable discussion as to what "democracy in education" really means. To some it has meant, and still means, that all are to have the same opportunity to profit from the same educational program. To those who held this point of view, the fact that a goodly number failed to profit from such a uniform offering has not been such a serious matter. The consciences of the advocates of this program have been comforted by the fact that the learners at least had a chance to avail themselves profitably of such an offering even if they did not, or could not, profit by such an opportunity.

a. Individual Philosophy of Frontier Life

Such a point of view could have fitted in well with the pioneer and frontier philosophy of rugged individualism. When people are living a rapacious type of life, it is easy to see how they perforce behave individualistically, and how the resulting attitude would influence their behavior in areas other than that of mere subsistence. Such a condition would result in the sloughing off of those who could not fend for themselves

or those who could not contribute rather obviously to the welfare of the embryonic society.

b. Differentiations in Modern Life

A conception of democracy as equal opportunity for all, without regard for the individual's capacity to profit by the opportunity offered, inevitably results in a waste of human materials. This is particularly obvious in a complicated society that has passed the stage of physical pioneering, and is becoming noted for the increase in its service functions, such as the distribution and preparation of everyday commodities. As a population becomes physically more stable, it begins to look to the conservation of its human materials and to the efficiency of its different methods of dealing with them. Such a change in social life results in the development of a conception of democracy that tends increasingly to stress personal as well as group values. This second point of view holds that democracy is a social pattern wherein each individual is entitled to an opportunity to develop to the limit of his capacity. This interpretation is more tenable, because it is not only based on the psychological fact of individual differences in capacities to develop, but also on the socio-industrial fact of widely differing kinds of work to be done.

2. Individual Differences

Modern psychology has contributed much to the identification of these differences in basic capacities--whether in the field of so-called academic intelligence, sensory discrimination, or motor coordination. The progress in this field has been so great that education has been unable to keep pace with the implications that have come out of this young but vitally important field.

a. Each Child is Unique

Practical limitations have compelled us to treat lightly the fact that each child is unique. Whether we like it or not, we have to recognize that a mass education ideal carries with it the fact that children will be educated in groups, and all too often as groups. Fortunately, we are going through a period in which emphasis is being placed on the individual. In the main, however, only minor adjustments have been made for that occasional child who, for one reason or another, has attracted our attention, and who perhaps, has forced us into a protective type of activity. It is to be hoped that such modifications will become the rule rather than the suspected exception. It is also fortunate that we have been enabled by modern psychology to redefine our groups.

Rather than to identify these groups on the basis of shape of head, or position of eyes, or height of forehead, we are able to characterize them in terms of more objective and defensible measurements. New techniques have been developed by which we are able to recognize latent abilities and aptitudes, to identify the several varying types of intelligence, and more effectively select for special treatment those who would otherwise remain the unsolved problems of the school.

b. Mental Capacity the Basis of Special Education

While the work that is being done in the areas of vocational aptitude, social maturity, and emotional adjustment is altogether creditable, the basic element in the intellectual processes of learning is that of mental capacity. It has always been recognized that people differ; but only in the last thirty years or so have we developed the skill to estimate these mental differences. By means of psychological examination, measures of intelligence are made which are stated in terms mental age and intelligent quotient. There is no single measure, however, that may be accepted as a satisfactory guide in determining capacity for achievement. Specific disabilities present proficiency in the several elements involved in the

educational procedure; character traits; personality; special aptitudes, skill, and abilities should also be considered.

c. Intellectually Inferior and Superior Individuals Recognized

Since we are better able than ever before to objectively indentify varying degrees of mental capacity, and since we are becoming increasingly committed to the proposition that each member of society should be enabled to profit from educational opportunity to the limit of his capacities, it would seem quite reasonable for a state or a nation to make separate provision for the proper education of those who deviate markedly in either direction from the normal. Such is the purpose of "special education." This particular type of function contributes to an outcome that is doubly desirable; it increases the effectiveness of the work not only for the middle or average groups, but for the deviates as well.

3. Content and Method

In addition to this conception of the meaning of democracy in education, and a recognition of the implications of individual differences and their objective identification, a defensible philosophy should include in its scope some consideration of the content and method of special education.

L322029

a. Adaptation to Capacities and Needs

It is not necessary here to go into detail concerning the content that is appropriate to the field of special education. It is sufficient to say in general that the materials of learning should be adapted to the child's capacities, abilities, interests, and his immediate and probable future needs. For the mentally superior child, there should be an enrichment of the curriculum with increasing opportunity in the development of creative experiences. There should also be a more rapid increase in the degrees of difficulty, and the anticipation of a wide and complicated variety of needs, and a requirement for the achievement of results commensurate with the pupil's talents. For the mentally slow child, there should be provided opportunity for participation in experiences adjusted to his intellectual and social level, and a greater amount and a more meaningful kind of drill, an extremely gradual increase in the difficulty of the work, and the realization that his needs will be relatively restricted. For the physically handicapped child who is of average mentality, whether he be partially sighted, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, physically delicate, or crippled, it should mean an educational program which would include as much of the experience materials of the

non-handicapped as would be consistent with each individual's ability and make provision for the use of every available aid in effecting such instruction.

With particular consideration of the problem of helping such a child to learn to take care of himself in the everyday world of non-handicapped individuals. As in all education, it should be realized that children's varying degrees of mastery of the tool subjects should be intended definitely for the purpose implied in the word "tool", as a means to an end. One does not learn to read merely for the purpose of being able to read; one learns to read in order to enjoy himself or to find his way around or to protect himself.

b. Integration of Learning

It would be pleasant to conceive of a classroom as a place where there are no such things as textbooks, and where it is not realized by the pupils or the teacher that there are any such separate activities as arithmetic, spelling, English, writing, and the like. The mere naming of them as separate ways of behaving tends to be dangerous. Such classification of behavior tends to give the impression that one writes without writing sentences or works arithmetic without the benefit of spelling. The

task of education is not to see that the children learn arithmetic or spelling or any particular subject, but rather to enable them to live more richly, with the school's cooperation, than they would if they were out in the streets, at the movies, or even in the home. Of course, these children may, in the process of living meaningfully in the school or on trips around town, learn to read; they may also learn something about numbers and expressing themselves orally and in writing. It is the hope of society that they will develop some of these useful abilities; but the school is obligated both from a psychological and social point of view to place the major emphasis on their living rather than on their going through forms of activity that are all too often highly artificial and without meaning to the child.

c. Artificial vs. Natural Experiencing

Let us see what this amounts to more specifically.

In one class a child, who in all probability would not mentally mature as an adult beyond a level of eight or nine years, works with futility at the job of multiplying a three digit by a two digit number. He does not get very far with this task because of his mental limitations, and hence is not ready for such artificial behavior.

Added to this is the fact that he already has had six or seven years of practice in the techniques of failure and has acquired a basic attitude of failure. This child's situation is further complicated by the fact that he has not mastered the preliminary number concepts which are needed in the working of such an example, and also the fact that on reaching maturity he will not in all probability encounter that type of artificial situation.

How much more meaningful such a child's life could be if he were to encounter a class situation evolving from his life in a social group where he could feel an actual need, such as using mail order catalogs to find the price of traps or coats or wagons, or anything else that may be at his level of interest, to determine whether or not the class could afford to order equipment for themselves. How naturally he might encounter the situations involving reading, writing, computation, and spelling! How easily he could confront the opportunity to investigate the route the goods would have to travel, the location of certain towns he hears about, and the distance to places he knows!

d. A Readiness for Living

Whether the school is adjusting its program to the intellectually superior or inferior child, the blind,

the deaf, the crippled, or any other kind of child, its job is to furnish children the opportunity to live in an environment where they will be encouraged to develop a wide variety of meaningful experiences as a result of which they will be able to live more richly after they leave school. The school has too long been a highly artificial place which children have honestly, and probably justifiably, disliked. To the extent that the school situation departs from a natural, social, living situation, to that extent it will fail in its real purpose. If this is true of the average child, it is true a hundred-fold in the case of the exceptional child. This does not mean that we shall not have reading, writing, and arithmetic. We shall have them, and all the other necessary forms of behaving, but they will serve only as means to the end of more effective social adjustment, rather than as ends in themselves.

4. Personality Adjustment

Directly growing out of this concept is the matter of personality adjustments of special class children. The mental capacities of exceptional children often bring about frustrations and lack of adjustment to situations to such an extent that their emotional development is frequently unbalanced or unstable. This must receive very thoughtful

consideration.. What is known about the development of mental health in normal children is equally applicable to exceptional children. It is particularly urgent that these principles be applied in the education of exceptional children because of their many personality problems.

Burnham in his book, "The Normal Mind", which has become a landmark in the field of mental hygiene, said there are three essentials to mental health--a task, a plan, and freedom to perform the task in light of the plan. This statement has tremendously significant implications to those who are working with exceptional children. It follows that the task must be appropriate to the capacities and interests of the child, that different children may need varying amounts of help in formulating the plan to perform the task and that provision must be made for varying amounts of freedom.

a. The Right to Succeed

Another essential principle suggests that every child has the right to succeed. All children can not expect to become a Horace Mann or an Abraham Lincoln or a Thomas Edison, but they have every right, from the standpoint of their own mental integrity, to succeed in some activity that is neither contemptuously simple nor discouragingly complex. This idea played no small part

in the early formation of special classes, since it seemed manifestly unfair to expect children who were handicapped in one way or another to compete with others not so fortunate.

b. A Conscious Social Membership

As a corollary to this principle each child has a right to feel that he is a contributing member of a group. Whether his attitude is one of contributing services by cleaning the erasers, writing an original composition, or perpetrating some form of annoyance, must rest in the last analysis with the school. If most acts of crime and lawlessness are manifestations of a desire to obtain group recognition, the school must make provision for the development of opportunities for each individual to find ways of satisfying this desire in socially acceptable ways in order to counteract this tendency.

c. Personality, An Outcome of Learning

Educators should be constantly aware of the fact that, so far as they are concerned, personality is influenced by education. Educators do not administer ductless gland extracts in order to affect the behavior of children. They do not give children greater or less basic intelligence. Neither do they give the children tall or short statures.

But they do deal directly with the emotional behavior of children. After making due allowance for possible inherited tendencies, the particular ways in which emotional habits are expressed are in large measure the results of what children learn either at home or at school or elsewhere. Like any other habits, they can be encouraged to continue or they can be changed. Children can be taught when and how to smile, or when and how to pout and frown. They can be taught at what to be angry or what to love. Much of this is done unintentionally, but it is done nevertheless.

A defensible philosophy of education then, must provide for an adjustment to wide variations in the capacities and abilities of those for whom it must plan. These differences, the varying degrees of which are now much more objectively identifiable than was true heretofore, should not only necessitate both simplification and elaboration of content of education, but should also require a reconsideration of the methods of instruction to be used on the various types that deviate from the average of the group. They should likewise make us increasingly alert to the personality problems involved.

III THE PRACTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. The Development and Scope of Special Education

In a young country, provision of special educational

facilities for the deviates of its public school population is very slow to develop. Particularly is this true when the constituency of that country has originated where education has been intended for the classes rather than for the masses. Such was the situation during the early days of our country. When children were found who needed special education, they were either prevented from entering upon the regular education program, or were removed from it upon discovery. They were then either returned to the home for whatever education they might obtain there, or later, were provided for by some separate agency. This general practice was at first a private humanitarian undertaking; later it became a sporadic undertaking by a few laboratories, and still later by some public schools. Finally, it has become a part of the planned educational program of the State. In Pennsylvania, for instance, special education was undertaken as early as the 1890's. Soon afterward a few independent school districts, on their own initiative, provided special education facilities in much the same manner as "experimental" schools are still being conducted. But it was not until 1920 that Pennsylvania provided a definite place in its total educational program by establishing a Division of Special Education.

a. Early Emphasis on Mental Deficiencies

Just as the early efforts in the field of special education were restricted, so has the implied definition of the scope of the field been narrowly conceived. Special Education in the public schools at first had to do almost entirely with those educational efforts that were put forth for mentally retarded children. Unfortunately this part of the program has changed only slightly. For instance, out of a total of 843 special classes in the Commonwealth at present, 671 are for mentally retarded children. Instead of a situation where there are four special classes for mentally slow children to one for all the other kinds needing special education, there should be a ratio of one of the former to two of the latter.

b. Pennsylvania a Pioneer

Lest these figures create the impression that we are particularly remiss in this report, it should be pointed out that on the basis of a recent study made by the United States Office of Education, Pennsylvania was one of only thirteen states in which specific provision was made for the inclusion, on the professional staffs of state departments of education, of a person who has at

least some responsibility in the organization and supervision of special facilities for exceptional children.

It should be noted further that in only three of our forty-eight states, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, is this person's time devoted entirely to the program of special education. Ohio's program, however, is intended wholly for the physically handicapped child. Certain other states, New York, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Wyoming, for instance, provide special education facilities, but in a much more decentralized manner.

c. Scope of Special Education

An adequate description of the scope of the facilities of special education should include, in addition to those provided for the mentally backward and the physically handicapped, those relating to speech correction and special educational adjustments to the mentally superior child. It should be recognized that the term "physically handicapped" includes those who are physically delicate--nutrition, and cardiac cases, those which require orthopedic and special sensory facilities--the partially sighted and the partially deaf who can still profitably be cared for in the public schools, and those who are temporarily incapacitated through injury or quarantine,

and who are cared for by teachers who visit their homes.

In a few states there are day classes even for the totally blind and the profoundly deaf.

2. The Identification of Exceptional Children

To deal intelligently with exceptional children, it is necessary to be able to identify and diagnose them scientifically. For the most part, this responsibility has been met by such public servants as the teachers, school medical inspectors, and school nurses. Such attempts were distinct improvements over a laissez-faire policy. There were, however, numerous cases that were, from a mental standpoint, either overlooked or incorrectly diagnosed. On the one hand, teachers reported children as having low mentality who were really solely emotional problems, and on the other hand, overlooked instances of low mentality where the children were not getting along satisfactorily but were so pleasant about it that they failed to receive necessary attention. Moreover, some physicians diagnosed sensory-handicapped cases as mentally backward, and failed also to recognize less obvious cases or intellectual inferiority.

a. More Scientific Methods

With the development of psychological measurement, we are able to ascertain the mental status of a

child. This should not be interpreted as meaning that such mental measurements can now be made without error. That is not possible and, in a strict sense, probably never will be possible. It is possible, however, to make such measurements with smaller error than was true of the less well-prepared persons and also with less error than was prevalent in early testing. In light of this, then, it would seem highly desirable, increasingly, to make use of the services of those who are specifically prepared to make such examinations, and to relieve those whose professional preparation and interests are not in these fields.

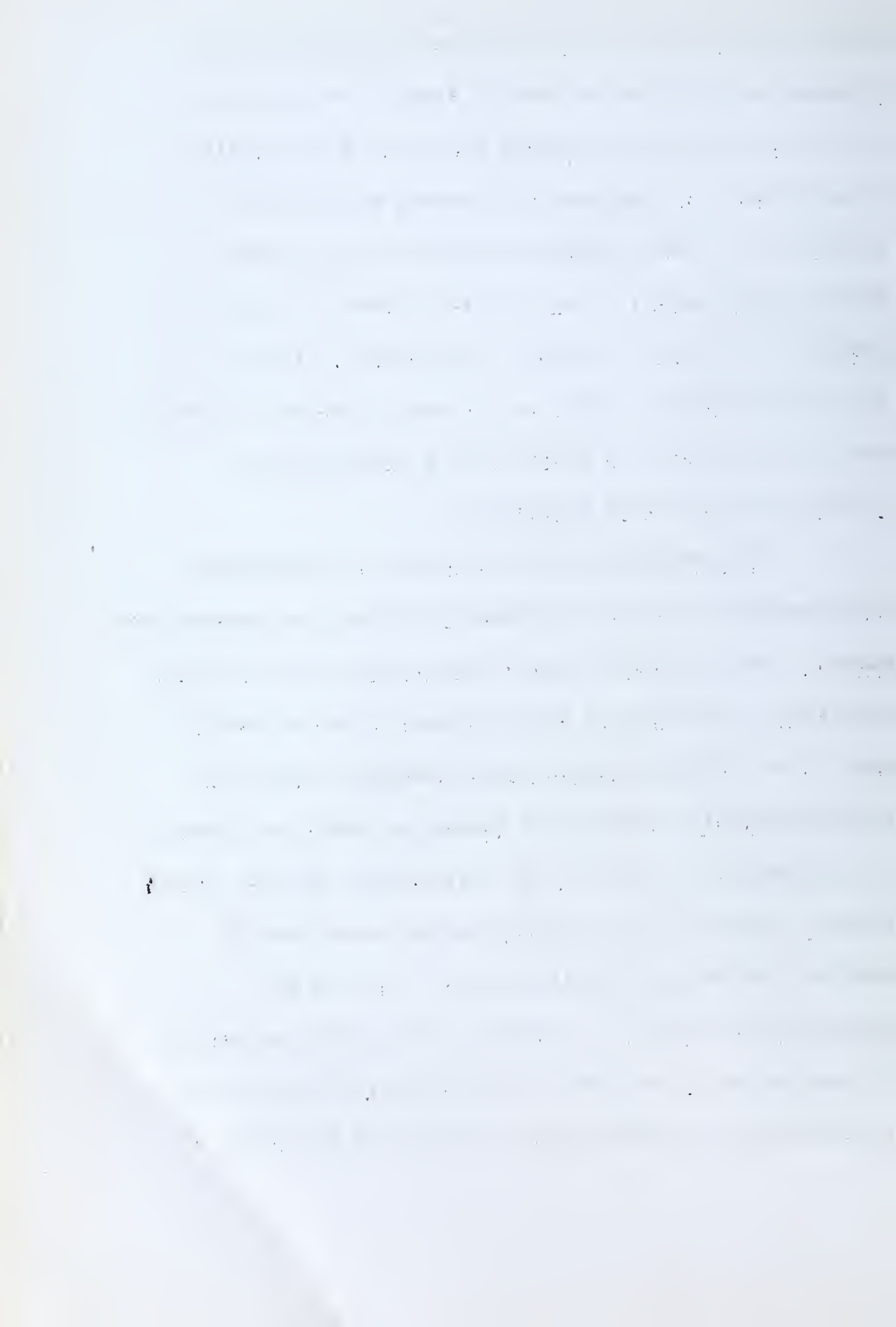
b. Employment of Specialists

Evidence of the recognition of the value and need of psychological examinations by properly qualified individuals is shown in the services that have been rendered on an ever-increasing scale by mental hospitals, in the employment of school psychologists as part of public school staffs, and in the widespread certification of psychological examiners and public school psychologists. In some instances there has been enacted legislation which has made the services of properly certified

psychologists increasingly necessary. Only this year, Pennsylvania modified the School Laws to provide that each child placed in a special class for the mentally retarded shall be examined by a person who has been certified as a psychological examiner or as a public school psychologist, or in a mental clinic that has been approved by the State Council of Education. It will also be noted later that county supervisors of special education are to be certified as public school psychologists.

c. Increased Diagnostic Facilities

The measurement and diagnosis of exceptional children quite obviously includes more than the psychometric aspect. State mental hospital clinics have made no small contribution by means of their preventive and corrective work in the field of individual adjustment. Numerous other worthwhile clinics have sprung up under the direction of colleges, universities, and civic-minded groups. Still further services are being rendered by public school guidance programs and their provision of improved diagnostic facilities in measuring children's capacities to hear and see. The use of audiometers, for instance, in public school systems has passed beyond the stage of



being a novelty, and is already a matter of standard practice in the determination of children's auditory acuity. Illustration of a further development along this line is the fact that Pennsylvania has provided specifically for the purchase and use of improved testing devices for the eyes and ears of all its school children.

3. Variation in Needs for Special Education

In areas of high concentration of population it is comparatively easy to provide special education facilities. In rural areas, the relative scarcity of children needing such opportunities complicates the problem tremendously. In the urban areas, it is possible to have one or more centers where special education facilities can be made available to those needing them. This type of situation results in conditions ranging from a single class-usually for the mentally backward-- to a number of centers wherein the children can be grouped advantageously, not only according to mental level but also according to the particular nature of the needs of the child. A community of three to five thousand population can not reasonably be convinced of the need of a special class for the hard-of-hearing or the partially-sighted,

largely because a community of that size usually does not have a large enough number of such cases.

a. Rural Needs

The problems of the provision of special education facilities in the rural areas is really more acute than in the urban areas. A number of factors contribute to this condition. In the rural schools there is a large percentage of inexperienced teachers, there is a marked turn-over of teaching staff, and the school term has been shorter. These facts suggest a need for a compensating greater educational efficiency if the rural child is to be brought up to the level of the urban child. Since only approximately ten per cent of the elementary school population are customarily recognized as needing special education, and since the largest sub-group accounts for only three to five per cent of the population of the elementary grades, it can be seen that in a rural school of twenty-five to fifty pupils, there would be only three to five pupils needing any kind of special education. Since there would be a variety of exceptional children rather than all mentally backward, or all hard of hearing, or all nutrition cases, no one type of adjustment would

be adequate. Add to these conditions the fact that sizeable distances often separate such schools and one is forced to one of two conclusions; either these exceptional children must be transported considerable distances to special education centers, or they must be educated in situ.

b. Advantages of Centralization

In a few counties in Pennsylvania, for instance, where the pattern of good roads is favorable, interest in special education centers is being shown--in some instances in combination with proposed vocational schools. In other areas, special classes are being planned as an integral part of the consolidation program. In many rural areas, however, such centralization will develop only very slowly and in a very limited degree. As a result, it will be necessary, temporarily, to provide for these exceptional children in the small schools where they are found.

This means that an increasing amount of time in the preparation of teachers will have to be devoted to the study of ways in which to adjust to the various kinds of individual differences we are here considering. Not only will the teachers need to know how to use special education facilities, but they must be provided with such things as

greater handwork equipment, individual hearing aids, sight saving equipment, and more circulating library materials, particularly for the mentally superior child. In order to facilitate this type of adjustment, the administrative and supervisory officers will need to become increasingly tolerant of such desirable departures from the more or less conventional classroom practices.

c. Expert Supervision

In order to meet this need, much more intensive and informed supervision is necessary. To expect this to be done properly by a state department would be impossible, due to the scope of the problem. It could be done by emphasizing this aspect of the work of county supervisors, but they already protest at the size of their task. The next possibility would be the provision of a county officer who would concern himself with the adjustment of the exceptional children. Such a position is justified not only on the grounds of a more defensible adjustment to the particular needs of the ten per cent, but also on the grounds of the improved efficiency that would result for the ninety per cent.

Pennsylvania's pioneering provision for the appointment, in 1939, of county supervisors of special

education, illustrates what seems to be a thoroughly intelligent recognition of this need. These supervisors are required by law to be certified both as teachers in Pennsylvania and also as public school psychologists, which means that they have completed sixty-six hours of work in educational and clinical psychology. In accord with the difficulty of their task they are required by the State to have more professional preparation than any other public school teacher. A very large part of their work will perforce be that of assisting teachers to make adjustment to all kinds of exceptional children in the regular schools

4. The Cost of Special Education

Basically, the State does not pay for education any more than it pays for crime, highways, or battleships. The ultimate source of income for such expenditures is the public. The functions of the State are those of collecting from the public and disbursing to particular agencies the funds to be used for the various functions. In this manner, then, various states encourage particular localities or areas through the granting of appropriations. A few states motivate school districts to provide educational facilities for exceptional children by granting them sums of money in addition to the customary assistance. These amounts range from \$100 to \$1500 per class.

a. The Wisdom of State Subsidies

As a matter of State policy, it is fitting that such additional inducement be given local communities to provide for the proper education of exceptional children. This is true particularly in the early stages of such adjustments. No uniform policy exists as to the ways in which the school districts use the extra reimbursement. They reason that since the teachers of special classes are required by the State to have additional preparation for such work, the basic salaries of these teachers should be somewhat higher than those of regular elementary teachers. A further illustration is the fact that, although the basic salaries and traveling expenses of Pennsylvania's county supervisors of special education are to be paid by the State, additional amounts may be paid by certain counties on their own initiative.

b. State Residential Schools for the Handicapped

The provision of instructional facilities in State schools for the deaf and blind can likewise be included under the heading of provision for exceptional children. More than one million dollars is spent biennially on these children who seem capable of profiting from such opportunity. Cases which are extremely low mentally quite logically

are under the jurisdiction of welfare agencies, with which educational institutions may cooperate in providing suitable developmental opportunities.

5. Lower Limits of Mental Exceptionality

Granting that society is obligated to provide educational facilities for its deviates, there arises the practical question as to how far down the mental scale it is justifiable to go in including those who may be expected to profit from the public school program. While modern psychology is appropriately opposed to the identification of hard and fast groups, it is convenient to designate boundaries of groups, recognizing that these boundaries are for the most part arbitrary. The statement that the regular classroom teacher should hold herself responsible for the educational adjustments of children ranging from approximately eighty to 150 I.Q. could easily be interpreted as being inflexible if it were not emphasized that extenuating circumstances of social, psychological or physical natures should be considered. Probably no definite "I.Q." limit should be set. There may be instances in which children with "I.Q.'s" well over eighty or even ninety may be fit subjects for special education. On the other hand, these may be pupils with much lower "I.Q.'s" who would profit by regular grade instruction.

a. Cases Unsited for Public Schools

As a matter of general practice, this question has not been answered specifically. This has resulted in the presence in some classes of children who seemed to contribute nothing educationally to the group they happened to be in and who, to all appearances, gained nothing from such opportunity. Out of fairness to themselves, as well as to the group, it seems justifiable that they should be excluded from the schools and become subjects of welfare agencies with the provision that educational institutions supervise such learning programs as these individuals may profitably pursue. To this end, Pennsylvania recently made it possible to exclude from the public schools children who seemed unable to profit even from special class facilities due to their inadequate mental capacity.

The definition of the upper limit of this excludable group was more or less arbitrarily set at I.Q. fifty, it being possible in certain exceptional cases to extend this to seventy-five. Such exclusion is permissible only when the individual examinations are given by properly certified persons or in approved mental clinics. An additional check against misuse of this procedure is provided by the fact that each exclusion is to be approved by the Chief of the Division of Special Education before the act

of exclusion is officially completed.

b. Broader Basis of Examination

As was suggested, the use of a single criterion in such a matter as exclusion from the public schools may result in serious complications. While this method is an improvement over the earlier procedure whereby the medical examiner's diagnosis sufficed, the basis of exclusion will need to be broadened. As it stands now, for instance, a child with a mental age of three may enter Pennsylvania's public schools even though he is potentially too immature mentally to do so. There will be instances where children who have I.Q.'s below fifty can profitably be kept in public school special classes. Such adjustments can be made in light of the best interests of the child and the group in which he is living.

6 Outcomes of Special Class Work

A statement of the benefits of the work of special education must rest largely on the high hopes we all have for this work and the reasonableness of the provision of special educational facilities for exceptional children, rather than on a knowledge of objectively discovered outcomes. Outstanding among the merits claimed for special education is that which accrues to the child who is the subject of it. His educational and social picture is simplified; it

is more meaningful to him and he has a greatly increased chance to succeed in something that is meaningful to him. If such advantages result it is contended his total adjustment is enhanced, he is a more self-respecting, socially dependable member of society. There is not one of us who would not hope this to be true. In addition to the fact of hoping, it seems quite logical that such should be the case.

a. Individual Competency, a Criterion

We must face the fact, however, that we have little dependable objective evidence that an exceptional child who has had special education facilities is more competent socially than is a child of similar capacities who has not had the opportunities special education affords. It is true that when exceptional cases have been transferred to special classes they have played truant less. If the educational system in which they happen to be is alert and broadly conscious of its problem, the children will be brought up to better physical health, or enabled to read simpler material heretofore bewildering to them, or find they can make things they never before had a chance to make.

While these advantages are demonstratable, there are some folks who still want to know if these outcomes

are of value to society. The number of well-controlled studies to answer this question is pitifully small. The few, small studies in which an attempt has been made to control probable influencing factors so indicate that those children who have had special education facilities have, on leaving school, supported themselves more consistently, have worked in a wider variety of occupations, and have been in the courts less frequently. The direction of this objective evidence is encouraging.

b. Social Advantages

In addition to the values to the individual, there are also others which accrue to the group. Over and above the improved social competence on the part of the exceptional child and its attending enhanced value to the group, it seems reasonable that there should also be an increased efficiency in the learning activities of his classmates. While this has not been quantitatively established, it is probably one of those conclusions we can accept as a working hypothesis on an a priori basis until specific findings are available. It seems defensible, then, to presume that there are both immediate and ultimate beneficial results of special education. These are, perhaps, less obvious in the bases of mentally retarded children

and delicate children, but become more apparent in the cases of the blind, the deaf, and the crippled.

On the basis of the few studies that have been made on the value to the individual and to society of special education efforts, a much more comprehensive and a very well controlled study should be made of the outcomes of a program providing for these exceptional children. Such study must vary with the kind of social picture in which the children live, their kind of exceptionality, and their sex. The findings of such an investigation would contribute much to the determination of future policy in this area.

IV POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Influence on General Method

Viewing the educational process broadly, one of the greatest contributions special education has made to the rest of the field is in the area of improved method. A basic concept in special education is that of actually adjusting to individual differences. The program of special education is nothing more than that. Psychologists and educators have long been talking about making such adjustments not only to those who deviate markedly, but also to those whose differences are not so pronounced.

Workers in special education are increasingly impressed with the frequency and variety of adjustments that are effected for exceptional children. Making the child the center of the educational process has not progressed nearly as to so we would desire, even in special education, but what changes in practices and attitudes have taken place have begun to permeate the remainder of the educational system. One would not be addicted to too great optimism if he were to observe that the long-time contribution of special education will be that of a changed attitude among educators and an effective method in bringing about the "child-centered school".

2. Teacher Preparation

Concomitant with the influence of the methods of special education on that of education in general will be the need for the appropriate professional preparation of teachers in special education. The colleges and universities that offer a program for all types of certification are few in number. Not more than five are found in the eastern half of the country. A number of schools do, however, offer work for specific types of certification. When teaching of special classes is recognized as the difficult tasks it is, and when the

contribution of special education to the total social picture is appropriately recognized, the teachers in this field will be more carefully selected and the requirements for certification will be adjusted to the significance of the task. Greater emphasis will need to be placed upon the work in arts and crafts and more time will be devoted to classroom experience growing out of the children's lives. One idea must be dominant in the whole program of teacher preparation for special education, and that concept is that the whole task of the school is to adjust the program to the child's needs, capacities, and interests.

3. The Intellectually Superior Child

Because it has been taken for granted that intellectually superior children would take care of themselves, and since they have, as a group, been less obviously troublesome in school, special adjustments of this group have been grossly neglected. Unfortunately, one cannot state in quantitative terms the loss that society most surely has suffered through its failure to provide for the fuller realization of the capacities and interests of these children. Popular misconceptions of the superior child to the effect that he is undersized and socially maladjusted, were

encouraged by faulty attempts to promote him more rapidly than his classmates, and by our failure to study the problem objectively. Fortunately, the latter has now been done on a dependable scale and we are wisely coming to a realization that enrichment is better than acceleration.

a. Ability Grouping

Ability or "homogeneous" grouping has been tried as a means of caring for unusually bright children. In too many cases this practice has resulted in treatment that was no different from that accorded the other children, and its main outcome was acceleration. At the secondary school level educators were forced to recognize the need for different educational programs because of college entrance requirements and compulsory attendance laws. No such factors forced the issue at the elementary level; hence the problem of this group of exceptional children has become even more acute.

In only a very few instances have special classes been provided for mentally superior children. Only one to two per cent of the elementary school population falls in this category; hence the possibilities of such arrangements are smaller than for certain other groups of exceptional children. As a result, much of the work for superior

children will have to be made in the classrooms with the rest of the public school children. It thus becomes necessary to develop greater flexibility in their programs, provide extended library facilities to which they have maximal access, and provide teachers who possess a broad cultural orientation and who are more alert to the unpredictable behavior for which this group is noted.

b. Specific Adjustments

As an aid to teachers in dealing with this kind of child, there should be developed a very extensive list of specific adjustments that can be made in different subject matter areas, and at different educational levels. Such a compilation of projects or problems, with sources of information and statements of possible ramifications, would be a real boon to the teacher who has all she can do with the thirty to forty children in her room and who, perhaps, has had limited education in adjusting to the needs of the superior child.

c. Adjusting to the Sparsely Settled Areas

The problems of the less thickly settled areas represent possibilities for valuable expansion of the facilities of special education. Wherever possible, centers to which exceptional children can be transported should be

developed. In some counties this will mean the provision of single centers, while in others it should result in the establishment of smaller centers advantageously distributed throughout the counties. The fact remains, however, that there will be areas in which such adjustments will not be made due to the reluctance on the part of the authorities involved, the scarcity of extreme cases, and physical difficulties inherent in the whole situation.

a. Taking Education to the Child

We must meet the problems of exceptional children in these areas by taking special education facilities to them. Such a program, working perhaps on a county basis, would include the shifting from school to school of hand equipment such as small weaving devices, leather working kits, soil testing and fertilization units, and, wood-working outfits. There would need to be provided, either by the counties or the State, sensory aids which could be made available to school children. Hearing aids and sight conservation materials, for instance, could be loaned to those children who had been properly diagnosed as needing them.

b. Libraries for Intellectually Superior Children

For superior children in the elementary grades in the rural areas, the possibilities of circulating libraries have not really been tapped. For a biennial expenditure of \$500,000, for instance, Pennsylvania could put into operation an enrichment reading program in which each rural elementary school could have access each year to from fifteen to twenty books that would not otherwise be available. This amount would be only approximately one half of that spent on handicapped children. Such a reading program, developed solely on an enrichment basis, would contribute tremendously to our total social culture, and would open up challenging vistas to the long-neglected superior child.

5. The Responsibility of the Administrator

None of the adjustments implied in a special education program is going to be worth the effort involved unless the public school administrators encourage their teachers to take advantage of such facilities, or unless the administrators help bring the lay public to realize that efforts to adjust to exceptional children are thoroughly defensible. A brief, pungent statement, such as the following, might be adopted as epitomizing his whole

approach to the general public: A child to whose capacities, interests, and abilities the educational program is adjusted is a happy child. He is a self-respecting, confident individual. He is a real asset to any society. Special education is nothing other than the progress of making such an adjustment to the wide varieties and ranges of these interests, capacities, and abilities.

V CONCLUSION

1. A Permanent Program

It would seem, then, in taking a sane point of view concerning special education that we shall have to meet the needs of the various kinds of exceptional children either through the efforts of specially qualified teachers who can work effectively with these children in special classes, or through the suggestion of adjustments in the educational program of the regular classroom teacher by a properly qualified supervisor.

2. An Integral Part of Public Education

Just how far any State or Federal special education program should go in compensating for the inadequacies of the general public school program must eventually be determined more clearly than is now the case. As the

techniques of adjusting the school to the needs of all the different kinds of exceptional children become better known and more thoroughly developed, it seems inevitable that such methods will not continue to be thought of as relevant only to special education, but that they will become characteristic of the entire educational program.

3. Challenging Problems

We have seen how a defensible integration of the term "democracy in education" has forced us to greater length to provide for all children on the basis of their widely differing capacities, needs, and interests. Such adjustments, when they are made for those school children who differ considerably from their classmates, constitute special education. These varied demands present many challenging problems, such as the proper diagnosis of capacities, the need for an adequately prepared personnel to adjust to these exceptional cases, and the task of adjusting differently to the needs in urban and rural areas.

4. Vast Possibilities

Splendid possibilities lie before us in taking special education facilities to the rural child, giving greater recognition of the needs of the superior child

and realizing the beneficial influence of special education on the whole educational program. If the time comes when the general public education program is thoroughly individualized and group activities are justified solely on social grounds, the need for special education, as it is now conceived by still too few states, will disappear.

o o o

